



Environmental Simulation Center

Main Street Corridor Revitalization Project Phase II: Evaluation

City of Houston Planning & Development Department

DELIVERABLE 8 & 9: MUSEUM DISTRICT

EVALUATE PLANNING PROCESS & PRODUCTS

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of the Main Street Corridor Planning and Research Project: Evaluation 2 is to evaluate the planning process and product(s) as a result of the planning initiative: the Museum District Walk Project (2002-2003). The planning process will be evaluated with respect to two factors: (1) Nature and quality of partnership between public and private stakeholders and (2) effectiveness of engagement of the larger community. The evaluation of the Museum Walk Project is especially concerned with ensuring that the goals of the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP) have been met, and adherence to the Main Street Corridor Master Plan.

Guiding these planning efforts and this second phase of the evaluation project have been the TCSP Goals, which are as follows:

- Improve the efficiency of the transportation system.
- Reduce the impact of transportation on the environment.
- Reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investment.
- Provide people with better access to jobs, services, and trade centers.
- Encounter private-sector development patterns that achieve these goals.

Further guiding these planning efforts is the Main Street Coalition Master Plan, which is included in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which is part of the Metropolitan Transit Plan (MTP).



This evaluation the *Museum District Walk Project* is separated into two main efforts:

- Planning Process
- Planning Product: *Museum Walk Project: “Art of Walking”* prepared by Studio Land Associates (An interim report submitted in May 2003; the final report has not been completed as of the date of this evaluation. However, the interim report contains the essential design elements.)



2.0 Museum Walk Project

2.1 Process Evaluation

2.1.1 Summary of Results of the Process Evaluation

- The entire process involved virtually all Museum District stakeholders from the very beginning of the process starting with the selection of the design consultant. As a result, there was a sense of ownership by stakeholders of the overall process and the resultant design. This was confirmed by general buy-in from stakeholders to the implementation strategy of “sharing” costs of streetscape improvements with the City.
- The townhall meetings, focus groups, survey, and particularly the walkabouts were all extremely effective means of listening to the community and its stakeholders in coming up with the design elements for the Museum Walk Project.
- The design process contributed to achieving TCSP goals and the concepts of the Main Street Corridor Master Plan. Through an accountability process of many interests, the final design elements chosen support the goals of creating a safe, pedestrian friendly and engaging environment that connected the multiple land uses along with the new light rail station within context of neighboring areas and the entire Corridor.



2.1.2 Introduction

This section is divided into two main parts:

1. Presentation of the Museum Walk Project Planning Process in a case study format.
2. Evaluation of two specific aspects of the planning process:
 - Nature and quality of partnership between public and private stakeholders;
 - Effectiveness of engagement of the larger community.

Scope of this Evaluation

This evaluation will focus mainly on the process leading up to the finalized design of the Museum Walk Project as of May 2003. Specifically, the process evaluated will focus on public and private partnerships formed, and the community stakeholder involvement in the design of streetscape improvements.

2.1.3 Case Study: The Museum Walk Project Planning Process

The Museum District Walk project is a part of the Main Street Corridor Revitalization Project, an effort to enhance pedestrian and transit-oriented improvements along the 7.5-mile stretch of Main Street between Downtown and Loop 610 South. The goal of the Museum District Walk Project, as outlined in the Corridor's Master Plan, is to enhance the pedestrian experience within Houston's Museum District and to improve pedestrian links between museums, area attractions and transit stops. The new light rail line that crosses the district will likely increase the number of visitors who travel by transit and increase pedestrian activity within the neighborhood.

The major local organizations formed include the South Main Center Association, the newly formed Houston Museum District Association, consisting of 16 institutions, 6 of which are directly within the project design area. Funded partially by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the project consists of two phases:

1. Design and engineering; and
2. Implementation of improvements on Binz and Bissonnet Streets.

Phase 1 (Design and Engineering) began in January 2003 and has yet to be completed as of the time of this evaluation, although the design was finalized in May 2003. Public and stakeholder participation has been an important component of this phase and has helped to identify streetscape improvements and materials used, including street furniture, pavers, landscaping, way finding/navigation points & lighting. Phase I establishes a plan for streetscape improvements throughout the Museum District, and a final design for Binz Street Area around the Light Rail station and adjoining transit streets. The South Main Center Association (SMCA), The Museum District Association, consisting of 16 institutions, 6 of which are directly within the project design area helped select Studio Land Associates (SLA) as the designer through a community consensus process.



Partnerships were critical in addressing issues of equity for improvements to be fairly represented throughout the District. This was balanced with efforts to create a collaborative financing system for implementing improvements in the public right of way. Phase 2 (Construction) will tentatively commence sometime in 2004. Currently, \$200,000 of FHWA funds have been allocated towards the initial construction phase for streetscape and landscape improvements. Construction of the remaining phases will be undertaken by the Museum District Association, in partnership with the Main Street Coalition and other groups.

The Design Concept:

- Vision: A recognizable, pedestrian friendly, safe and pleasant environment,
- Theme: “The Art of Walking” extends access towards “fuller and richer experiences for the pedestrians promenading, meandering, and strolling thereby adding to the experience of visiting the museums, institutions, and businesses.”
- Elements: Improving and enhancing public-right-of-ways through paving, street furniture, lighting, signage, and landscape within the district.

2.1.4 Accomplishments

As of May 2003, the following list the accomplishments of the Museum District Walking Project, Design Phase:

Site Analysis

- Block-by-block site survey and documented analysis of existing street, sidewalk, access, landscape, signage, and street furniture conditions.

Design Process

- Walkabouts to facilitate more informed discussions of design issues.
- Townhall Meetings to discuss, develop, and present design solutions.
- A series of focus group sessions with key stakeholders.
- A survey of 97 stakeholders or users of the Museum District

Communication

- A website of the project through the City’s Planning and Development.
- An information kiosk located at the Museum of Fine Arts Visitors’ Center.

Design

- A set of Prototypes and Design Concepts to frame implementation of improvements.
- Specific Area Design Plans focusing on blocks and intersections of the Binz Street Area.



2.1.5 Nature and quality of partnership between public and private stakeholders.

The process involved the range of Museum District stakeholders from the beginning of the process. Stakeholders in the community were even involved with the selection of the design consultant. The selected consultant, Keiji Asakura of Studio Land Associates and his design team then facilitated an interactive process of consensus building and collaborative decision-making.

The overall process was inclusive of the range of stakeholders, participants, supporters, and technical advisors. There was consistent collaboration among the public and private stakeholders working closely with Studio Land Associates and the City of Houston Planning and Development Department and the Main Street Coalition.

- Planning Committee, made up of the SMCA and Studio Land Associates;
- Steering committee made up of Museum directors;
- Technical Advisory Committee made up of Metro, Public Works, Planning and Development, etc. They served as part of the review and approval process;
- The Stakeholders were identified as property owners;
- Other interested parties including civic groups and local residents, council members and state representatives.

The process was organized into a series of discussions, including project meetings, stakeholder focus groups, walkabouts, and townhall meetings. The following is an overview of the discussions.

Project Meetings

(With Planning and Development, SLA, Main St. Coalition, Susan Young of SMCA)

- November 21, 2002
- December 16, 2002
- January 17, 2003
- February 14, 2003

Stakeholders Interviews/ Focus Groups

- July 16, 2002 Keiji Asakura SLA with Susan Young, SMCA and Katy Butterwick, program manager at SMCA
- July 23, 2002 Marti Mayo, Director of Contemporary Arts Museum
- December 11, 2002 P&D and SLA with Ada Edwards, City Council
- December 28, 2002 Buffalo Soldier National Museum
- Feb. 10, 2003 Bill Hugens of METRO – finishes for light rail
- Feb. 10, 2003 Dr. Bankston, St Paul's Church
- March 25, 2003 Project meeting at Hermann Park: Zoo, Genesis Park, HMNS, Center for Contemporary Craft
- March 31, 2003 Andy Icken of Medical Center



Walkabouts

These pedestrian audits were conducted by an effective consultant, Charles Gandy over a period of five tours on five different days.

- Tour 1: Feb. 3, 2003 at Museum of Fine Arts: on parking, maintenance, and traffic
- Tour 2 Feb. 24, 2003
- Tour 3 Feb. 24, 2003
- Tour 4 March 8, 2003
- Tour 5: March 24, 2003

The Tours offered stakeholders to respond to what they saw collectively in the neighborhood, both positive and negative elements. The Walkabouts provided a framework from which to discuss the place-based issues (such as pedestrian safety, a pleasant walk, consistency of walk, lighting, public art and signage, etc.) and their implications. By offering walks throughout the day, attendees could see and state what features and elements and places they liked, disliked functionally and aesthetically in the environment, where certain streets needed streetlights or speed bumps, or traffic circle, or street parking, or sidewalk improvements or landscaping, etc. Also, attendees could experience and comment on the pedestrian experience to really understand and articulate what could be improved upon. A set of observations, needs, ideas, opportunities identified, and recommendations was recorded after each walkabout.

The walkabouts were an opportunity for stakeholders to be heard. Many who participated, including Susan Young of SMCA, agreed that they were one of the most effective facilitators of an informed discussion on the design issues.

Townhall Meetings

Feb. 6, 2003

- Overview of project
- Question and Answer session
- Further feedback process by marking up maps of particular areas of interest,
- Soliciting of preferences and demographic info to gain insight into their issues, ideas, and concerns.

March 6, 2003

- Overview, Background
- Preliminary Project Design Concepts
- Question and Answer session

May 13, 2003

- Presentation of Final Design

In general the process, according to Julie McClure of Genesis Park and other stakeholders, was very effective as questions and concerns were addressed in an appropriate manner, and consultants were very respectful to not play experts imposing ideas. They were great at listening to the desires and ideas of the community. Stakeholders were always asked what they wanted, and it was honored in a systematic, consensus-building way.



Julia Smith Wellner, President of Museum Area Neighborhood Association, also believed the Townhall meetings were successful and well represented by residents. However, she mentioned that part of the reason the meetings attracted so many stakeholders was that there were expectations created early on by the City and consultants of grand plans for large scale streetscape improvements and landscaping. The stakeholder excitement subsequently diminished after the initial meetings when the amount of improvements initially promised was scaled down significantly in the first stage.

Survey Result

A survey was distributed on May 5, 2003 to solicit another form of feedback. A total of 97 people participated in the survey. Items on the survey include the demographics of the stakeholders such as age, gender, residence, relationship to District such as how often they visit the Museums, and which ones are visited. Also questions were asked on the quality of their walk in the area – their sense of safety, quality of walk, condition of the streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure.

Questions were also asked on what people believed could be done to improve the pedestrian environment. In addition, participants were asked to rate the level of importance of neighborhood issues such as the quality of the lighting, signage, access issues, street furniture condition, landscaping, gathering spaces, bike access and circulation, maintenance issues, public transportation and parking.

Overall, the townhall meetings, focus groups, survey, and particularly the walkabouts were all a part of an extremely effective means of listening to the community and its stakeholders in coming up with the design elements for the Museum Walk Project. This was attested to by stakeholders including Julie McClure of Genesis Park, Julia Smith Wellner of the Museum Area Neighborhood Association, and the constituencies they each represent.

A Collaborative Design Process

The process, in all accounts, generated a sense of ownership by stakeholders of the resultant design. This was confirmed by general buy-in from stakeholders to the implementation strategy of “sharing” costs of the streetscape and landscape improvements with the City. For instance, according to Susan Young of SMCA, the partnerships created in the project’s design process helped alleviate initial mistrust among public and private stakeholders on how to fund improvements along the Esplanade of Montrose Boulevard. Through the partnership and participatory design process, developers along the Boulevard were bought into the process and the design, and agreed to help contribute financially as a collective effort in funding new landscaping along the public-right of way.

Such efforts to create a collaborative financing system for implementing improvements in the public right of way were balanced with maintaining equity for improvements to be fairly represented throughout the District. In many instances through the various improvement blocks, the City would agree to finance the



purchase and installation of the streetscape elements and the stakeholders would agree to pay to maintain it.

2.1.6 Effectiveness of engagement with the larger community.

The Project team used a variety of methods to engage the larger community into the process. Initially, stakeholders, as identified by SMCA, were notified about the Townhall meetings by mail through printed flyers. They were kept up to date on the progress and results of the meetings through written correspondence.

An information kiosk was set up and located in the Museum of Fine Arts Visitors' Center. Its effectiveness to communicate information to the larger community on the project is unknown.

Additionally, a website of the project was launched and maintained by the City's Planning and Development department. The website included meeting minutes and schedules of all Townhall meetings and walkabouts. Even in the interim stage of the process, the information presented in the website could be more informative of the process with visuals showing the design solutions of the project.

Susan Young of SMCA indicated that the press, including the Houston Chronicle, was present at some of the Townhall meetings and was able to cover much the discussion and process of the project. This is an effective means of accountability and communication to the greater community on what is occurring in the neighborhood.

According to Julie McClure of Genesis Park, "the process wasn't made more publicly transparent as it could have been." She cited the example of how the project's website was buried in the City's Planning and Development Department's multi-layered website. Julie suggests a more accessible website devoted exclusively to the project that more clearly provides meeting information, and findings (with visuals) on what was discussed and decided upon in the meetings. For instance, she suggests that drawings or photographs of the streetscape elements chosen could be posted on the website or handed out as pamphlets to the public as another means to get the word out to the larger community on what is happening. This may help generate interest and participation in the decision making process.

Julia Smith Wellner felt outreach and communication was more effective early on in the process and noticed there were a few gaps later in the decision making process. Therefore, she felt it was critical that the design consultants follow-through with outreach and public information to the community with the same effort throughout the process, particularly during implementation.

In general, the engagement of the larger community could be improved upon with more updated, visually informative, and accessible to the general public through flyers or a devoted website. The level of outreach effort must be kept consistent throughout the process, particularly near the end when critical decisions are made.



2.1.7 Conclusions & Recommendations

- The collaborative nature of the partnerships between public and private stakeholders and consultants created a very successful design and implementation process that fostered a deep sense of ownership in the design solution and the streetscape elements chosen. In many ways, this process unified the District stakeholders in helping to realize their part in the larger vision of the Main Street Corridor.
- The engagement of the larger community used a range of effective methods, but the execution could be improved upon with more updated, visually informative, and accessible to the general public through flyers or a devoted website.
- The Walkabouts were the most popular means of effectively facilitating an informed discussion for consensus building around the design of the environment. They created a common visual language for decision-making in context of the existing neighborhood, and should be used in future community design processes where appropriate.



2.2 Product Evaluation

2.2.1 Summary of Results of the Product Evaluation

- The Museum Walk Project/ “Art of Walking” documents addressed TCSP goals and the concepts of the Main Street Corridor Master Plan. The design elements subtly, yet effectively addressed the goals of creating a safe, pedestrian friendly and engaging environment that connected the multiple land uses along with the new light rail station within context of neighboring areas and the entire Corridor.
- The design solutions offer place-specific streetscape and landscape elements that are affordable, maintainable, and elegantly fit within the context of the neighborhood. They are clearly outlined in the Project documents.

Scope of this Evaluation

This evaluation will focus on the products leading up to the finalized design of the Museum Walk Project as of May 2003¹.

2.2.2 Introduction

This section is divided into main parts:

1. A brief summary of the Museum Walk Project documents developed to date.
2. The role of the products (the plans) in adhering to the Main Street Corridor Master Plan and achieving the TCSP Goals.

2.2.3 Summary of Plan

Museum Walk Project, “Art of Walking” documents by Studio Land, May 2003

1. Site Analysis

The analysis was a comprehensive summary consisting of the following:

- A series of maps and diagrams of the area.
- A review of previous area plans including the Main Street Corridor Master Plan and Traffic Element.
- Binz Street and Bissonnet Street summary: photos of sidewalk and street conditions at each intersections and right-of-way widths.
- A summary of all streets in the District study area with photos and descriptions of right-of-way widths and conditions.

¹ As of this writing the final versions of the Museum Walk Project/ “Art of Walking” documents have not yet been released. As a result this evaluation must focus on the documents dated May 2003.



- A photo documentation of street conditions based on quality of sidewalk, street trees, lighting, street furnishing, mid-block crossings, pedestrian safety, signalization, ADA compliance, and sign clutter.
- A list of institutions in the Design Area and their contact information.
- A sign survey showing every sign and what is written and represented.

The site analysis is a very useful resource guide to the discussion of place based improvement needs and a specific area design.

2. Public Participation

The public participation deliverable includes a written summary for stakeholder meetings and detailed, final notes of public and stakeholder meetings that were published on the Houston Planning and Development website.

- **Project Meetings**

The project meetings were recorded in the document as meeting minutes. An overview or summary of issues and action items discussed would have been helpful.

- **Stakeholder Interviews**

The stakeholder interviews included meeting notes of the conversation and important feedback taken from each interviewee. Overall, the comments were adequately recorded. A summary of findings during each interview may have been helpful to the reader to understand the overall issues and concerns and ideas discussed.

- **Walkabouts Summary**

The Walkability Tour summaries indicated the time of day and date of the tour as well as the main attendees. The general public comments made during each tour were listed, it appears, in order of when they were stated and in general provide adequate context as to where in the District it was referring. It would have been helpful if the summary of each Walkability Tour included a map and route of the walk. Points made by attendees could then be easily referenced as to who said it and at which point in the tour the idea was referring. Furthermore, images taken during the tour may also be helpful in the guide to understand and document what attendees were looking at and their corresponding comments. Finally, it would have been helpful to conduct a walking tour at night.

- **Townhall Meetings**

The Townhall meeting summaries were effectively recorded with an overview, items covered during the presentation, and the questions and answers clearly stated in the document as summaries.

- **Survey Results Summary**

A copy of the survey was printed along with final tallies. The survey provided a good overview of the demographics of participants as well as



their concerns and ideas about the improvements to the District that may not have been otherwise communicated or represented at the Townhall meetings. All survey participants said they visit the museums and frequently walk in the design area. Most felt safe walking the sidewalks but unsafe crossing streets.

3. Prototypes and Design Concept

Ideas and recommendations highlighted here were based on community input taken from the walkabouts, townhall meetings, and focus groups.

Design concepts had to be sustainable, which meant affordable, adaptable, durable, manageable, and enduring elements that could be implemented over time. The following design concepts were developed:

1. Guiding Concepts
2. Wider Sidewalks
3. Street Corners Enhanced for Pedestrian Safety
4. Mecom Fountain Circle and Hermann Park
5. Pedestrian Friendly Museum Plaza
6. District Entries
7. St Paul's Edge
8. St Paul's parking area
9. St Paul's Calumet closure at Fannin
10. Preserving oaks
11. Pedestrian Lighting
 - Pole Lighting Options
 - Ground Mounted Lights
12. Garden Corridors
13. Clumet at San Jacinto – Pedestrian Plaza
14. Caroline and Binz
15. Hermann Drive and park edge
16. District Nodes and Entries
17. Art of Walking is a pedestrian experience
18. Public Art – Extending the experience incorporating into the walking experience. Not over bearing elegant and subtle expression.

4. Specific Area Design

Binz Street Area Design Plans

As requested in the Scope of Services by the City of Houston, Studio Land Associates developed a specific streetscape design plan for the Binz/Bissonnet corridor that addresses “the integration of pedestrian and transit amenities with current and future land uses and create a cohesive identity and ‘a sense of place’ for the Museum District area. Each plan includes a list of the issues, further study, and improvements (sidewalk, street furniture, landscape, esplanades, lighting, and signage) along with a drawing highlighting these improvements.



Areas include:

- Mecom Fountain Area
- Montrose-north of Bissonnet
- Bissonnet between Main and Montrose
- Binz between Fanin and Main
- Binz between San Jacinto and Fanin
- Binz between Crawford, La Branch, Austin, Caroline to San Jacinto
- Caroline and Crawford at Calumet
- Holocaust Museum expansion area- Caroline between Binz and Calumet

The Area Design Plans includes a Cost Estimate itemized by building or street element per area for fair and proper implementation within the defined budget and timeline.

2.2.4 The Nature of the Museum Walk Project Plan

The plan is a district plan that focuses on *Strategy*. The Plan calls for a set of actions related to specific capital improvement projects that have specific locations, costs and timeframes associated with them. The plan is successful in achieving its goal of setting a very specific design plan and strategy for implementation within the constraints of budget, City code, community consensus, and the area's contextual issues.

2.2.5 The Plan in Accordance to the Main Street Corridor Master Plan and the TCSP Goals

Main Street Corridor Master Plan Feasibility & Transferability

There was general buy-in from Museum District stakeholders on the vision and ideas from the Master Plan. Representatives from the Main Street Coalition, including Susan Young, secretary of the Coalition, were an integral part of the design process for the Museum Walk District Project from the very start. The Project's Design concepts highlighted and further developed the Master Plan's goal to create an enhanced public environment in this district. In fact, many of the goals in the Master Plan of creating a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood that centered on the proposed rail stations and transit streets were translated into a set of feasible short and medium term strategies for the Museum District Walk Project:



Specific Corridor Master Plan Goals	Museum Walk Project Response
Pedestrian Safety and Access.	Crosswalks, bollards, sidewalk ramps, and lighting at critical intersections
Streets and spaces will link various uses	Strategic signage and consistent paving/ surface material to link activities to each other and to transit.
Generate more pedestrian activity both night and day by creating active, quality sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Street and pedestrian pole lighting along major streets; - Street tree planting and preservation; planting medians; groundcover. - Benches and other street furniture
Create a sense of a “front door” to visitors into the Museum District’s Museums and churches	Strategic pedestrian and auto directional signage at key locations to indicate visitor arrival to Museum District.
Develop a fully-integrated sidewalk program for the entire district, including street furniture, lighting, events banner, and public art.	A kit of parts of sidewalk, lighting, signage, and landscape elements that are sustainable, affordable, consistent, adaptable, maintainable, and manageable for stakeholders and City.

TCSP Goals Adherence

TCSP goals were addressed in the Project using streetscape and landscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience and its influence on the future use of the Light Rail System. The improvements will be implemented over phases through a limited budget from public and private partnerships. The Project’s design solutions responded to the over-arching TCSP goals:

- **Improve the efficiency of the transportation system.**

Through the use of strategic signage and other physical enhancements to the pedestrian experience and safety around the Light Rail Transit station and adjoining streets, the Museum Walk Project’s Area Design will improve the efficiency of and access to transportation. A safer, more quality pedestrian experience will, in essence, motivate visitors and commuters to use public transportation (light rail and local bus system) and walk, thereby reducing automobile traffic congestion in the District.

- **Reduce the impact of transportation on the environment.**

By improving pedestrian experience and thereby reducing the automobile traffic and use in the District, the Museum Walk Project will help to reduce the many negative impacts of transportation on the environment, such as air and noise pollution.

- **Reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investment.**

Reducing automobile traffic and use in the District will also help to reduce costs for future public infrastructure such as parking lots and structures.

- **Provide people with better access to jobs, services, and trade centers.**



An improved pedestrian experience and linkages between uses in the District will help to create better access to activities and services in the area as well as an improved network of public access.

- **Encounter private-sector development patterns that achieve these goals.**

In involving private stakeholders and developers early on in the process, specific area designs set the framework for future private development plans. For instance, direct participation into the Museum Walk Project design and collaboration from developers at Genesis Park in the implementation process have helped guide their own ongoing development plans for private residential and mixed-use projects in the District. Similarly, Saint Paul's Church is working closely with the City and its consultants on determining the location of public street furniture in their property as a part of the church's own development and expansion plans for the future.

Design Solution a Success

Susan Young of SMCA representing a range of stakeholders felt there was general consensus that the design solution was an "aesthetic that fit the District like a tee." The streetscape elements selected, according to most participants, were an attractive, elegant, simple, functional, and high-quality kit of parts that did not compete with the museums.

According to Susan and stakeholders through SMCA, the design team, a coordination of many consultants lead by Keiji Asakura of SLA, was exceptional and had a fine design sense. Most importantly, there was agreement that the team knew how to listen to the client, and did not try to imply simplicity. Instead they worked within complexity of situation to develop collaboratively with the community an appropriate design that used almost entirely "off the shelf" fixtures for easy maintenance. In summary, Susan reiterated that "the design was very practical yet understated, and represented exactly what everyone wanted. It was very successful."

2.2.6 Conclusions & Recommendations

- Based on a comprehensive study of the site, the design was successfully translated into a set of place-based elements that are elegant, affordable, maintainable, and realistically do-able within the technical and budgetary constraints.
- The final design solution of a streetscape and landscape kit of parts was successful in achieving the goals of creating a recognizable, pedestrian friendly, safe and pleasant environment, which supports the vision of the Main Street Corridor Master Plan and TCSP Goals.



2.3 Reference Material

2.3.1 Chronological List of Project Documents

1. *Museum District Walk Project Scope of Services*
City of Houston, 2002
2. *Museum Walk Project, "Art of Walking"*
Studio Land Associates (SLA), May 2003
 - Site Analysis
 - Public Participation
 - Prototypes and Design Concept
 - Specific Area Design
3. <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/department/planning/projects/museum/home.html>
 - Home
 - Project Schedule
 - Meetings
 - Meeting Notes
 - Contacts
 - Walkabouts

2.3.2 Phone Interviews with project team members and Stakeholders

In addition to evaluating the process and products through the above documents, phone interviews were conducted in November 2003 with available stakeholders and project team members listed below:

1. **Gayatri Anoo**, Senior Planner of City of Houston Planning and Development's Long Range Planning
2. **Susan Young**, South Main Center Association (SMCA)
Susan is part of a neighborhood umbrella group called South Main Corridor Association (SMCA), a 501c3 that represents Midtown and Rice. Her role is to connect the issues and concerns in that area. From the SMCA, a new 501c3 was formed called the HMDA (Houston Museum District Association) representing 16 Museums and directors. They make decisions on design and became the "arbiters of taste." The Association includes the MFA Museum of Fine Arts.
3. **Julie McClure**, Genesis Park, Greater South East Management District Board, Julie represents real estate group of Genesis Park, a mixed-use development and other property in the Museum District. She represents 17 acres of mixed use – its investors, tenants, and owners. Currently it is 1/3 developed with existing properties in the District.
4. **Julia Smith Wellner**, President of Museum Area Neighborhood Association
Julia represents residents in the area.



Interview Questions:

1. Briefly explain your role in the Museum District Walk Project and the role of the organization/ group you represent.
2. Who are the stakeholders of the Museum District and how well are they represented in the process? How might this process be improved upon?
3. Overall, how would you describe the effectiveness of the partnership/ coordination between the City, consultants, and the stakeholders of the Museum District in achieving the desired goals of the project?
4. How successful was the process to mobilize Museum/ neighborhood stakeholders in building consensus around the site planning (if any) and choice of landscape/ streetscape design of the neighborhood? What were the greatest challenges in this process?
5. Was there buy-in from the local stakeholders/ owners on the City's and the Main Street Coalition's vision for the Main St Corridor and how the Museum District plans/ current streetscape/ landscape improvements fit into this larger vision of a transit and pedestrian-oriented environment?
6. How effective was the process in communicating and building consensus with the stakeholders on budget allocation, owner responsibility/ commitment, and implementation phases of improvements?
7. How transparent was this overall process in engaging the public and larger community with the project?

